

**Present:** Dwight Baker; Andy Bennett; Hans Brandal; Dick Burkhart; John Coney; Ray Day, Jr.; Dave Elliott; John Jensen; Holly Plackett; Anirudh Sahni; Claire Schary; Mike Taylor

**Excused:** Sandy Paul-Lyle

**Staff:** Liz Krenzel, Project Manager, Bus Tunnel Closure; David Hull, Metro Transit Planner; Victor Obeso, Supervisor, Metro Transit Planning; Barbara de Michele, Community Relations Planner

**Guests:** Joan Sells, interim Vashon representative

Mike Taylor called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

### **Bus Tunnel Closure**

Krenzel gave a brief overview of progress on the bus tunnel closure project. Metro will begin closing the tunnel on Saturdays, beginning on June 4<sup>th</sup>. Some routes will also be diverted to the surface to help phase in the closure. During the closure, Metro will refurbish staircases and elevators, upgrade fire, life and safety systems, and thoroughly clean the walls and artwork. The roadbed will be lowered to accommodate low-floor buses and trains. Krenzel distributed a map showing how routes will be distributed from the tunnel to 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Avenues. A website has been established at: [www.seattletunnel.org](http://www.seattletunnel.org). TAC members expressed concerns about adequate communications about the closure and offered suggestions for additional ways to reach the public.

### **Waterfront Streetcar**

Obeso updated the committee on progress with the waterfront streetcar. Since the group's last discussion, Metro and the Port of Seattle have been working out the details of placing a new maintenance shelter on Port property north of the existing shelter. At this time, no "fatal flaws" have been identified in the plan and the Port proposal is considered viable. Planners are still determining cost, technical issues and which agency will pay for the project. De Michele reported on a Metro public meeting held in response to a letter from the International District/Chinatown, the Pioneer Square Association and the Downtown Seattle Association's Waterfront Merchants Committee. ID/Chinatown representatives expressed concerns about their proposal to extend the streetcar up Jackson Street, and Pioneer Square representatives continue to be concerned about preserving historical elements of the streetcar, but the meeting was, overall, very positive with regard to the Port's proposal.

### **Waterborne Transit Study**

TAC members provided Hull with feedback on the Waterborne Transit Study Task 2 Document, as follows:

- Taylor – It is a fairly readable document. The methodology is described well, as well as the results of each interview. However, there was no executive summary about the overall theme. I don't see a summary anywhere, so it's difficult to determine what the researchers learned from the interviews.
- Burkhart – I thought it was very interesting and I liked the way it was presented. I don't have specific feedback now.
- Baker – I liked the interview part of the document. I have no specific comments other than it is really good. I do have some "nit-picking" comments on wording, which I will provide to David.

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- Sells – I would have liked to see something that tied the interviews back to the customer choice issues. Because the companies interviewed were so different, I was left wondering why customers chose to use this or that particular service. I found myself flipping back and forth trying to see the connections. What was driving people to use the service?
- Day – I liked it. I do think there needs to be an executive summary. Legislators don't have time to read a whole report front to back. We need some bullets or points at the front that tell us what the overall findings were. I did appreciate the section with the interviews. The policy considerations were very good. But I needed more guidance identifying possible problems, and are these the issues we should be focusing on? I also would have liked more about interfacing with other transportation modes. But overall I liked it and learned a lot from it.
- Schary – I agree with other comments. The report kind of dumps a lot on you and treats it all exactly the same. It's a little overwhelming and the reader needs more guidance. It seemed to me when I read the report that "wake" is a factor that is going to be very important. It determines the speed at which the boats can run. That affects convenience. You could rate some of these factors as to which ones of these are important to the success of the service – which ones make it appealing, useful, attractive. Another point that arose when I was reading this was safety. If we tried to run the same service as what's being run at the Victoria waterfront, we'd have all sorts of accidents. We have totally different geography and topography, and those issues and differences need to be highlighted.
- Brandel – After I got done reading . . . it didn't tell me much. Maybe that's because I'm part of the process. The document didn't tie the studies to our topography. I didn't think this document would help me make a decision.
- Sahni – I think it's a very valuable document. Very readable and well-organized. The literature review is kind of overwhelming. But it gives me some assurances that our planners are not trying to re-invent the wheel. I will e-mail David with my grammar corrections.
- Jensen – Some kind of executive summary would be ideal. We need to be able to summarize the points quickly. The findings on operations seemed awfully light to me . . . it did not seem to be a good overview of operational issues.
- Bennett – My understanding of some of these operators is not quite as portrayed in the document. There are a number of factual things we want to comment on. The main thing for me is very little emphasis on inter-modal connections at the terminals. The down-playing of inter-modal connections surprised me. For example, should bus routes be re-routed to serve the ferries? It isn't viewing the ferry mode as one mode in an integrated system. I will e-mail a copy of my comments to David.
- Elliott – For those of us who have looked at a lot of studies, the validity goes away after about five years. There are some inconsistencies in the report . . . including one that I grew up with. San Francisco has been operating a ferry system since 1934. They have a long history of ferry service and some of the lessons learned might be of interest to us. As for the Sydney system, it's a massive system in a huge harbor. That's where they have wake issues. With wake issues you have a real problem. If you run fast enough to be efficient you harm the environment, and if you slow down your ridership drops way down. You need to look at putting parking lots on both sides of the ferry route. Every one of the routes has to be judged pretty much on itself. The phone interviews didn't get into the stuff that everyone wants to know, like who controls the system, what are the costs . . .
- Sahni – One thing I didn't see was a rationale for why you chose these particular ferry systems to interview . . .
- Plackett – I have two comments. There needs to be some sort of geographical reason why ferries are important. How many people live near the water . . . that kind of information. We

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need some kind of geographical background to tell us why we are pursuing this possibility. On page 4 you have some policy points and they could be a lot clearer. Get rid of words like “synergistic” and clean up the language so its crisp and clear. Otherwise, I learned a lot from the document. I agree with Anirudh . . . why did you choose these agencies?

- Coney – Being interested in history, I found the local history most informative, but I’m not sure how important it is to legislators. But the report doesn’t answer a basic question – why should we be interested in it at all? I see two items in the report: The first is that the Washington State Ferries may cut out its passenger-only ferry run business. I see a second more scary reason, and that is that we may need the ferry service for mitigation during the SR520 construction and during the Viaduct replacement. That’s going to be a decade-long thing. You should allude to those projects and connect them to the need for trans-lake transportation. I think the report should reflect the kind of direction you should take to influence legislators.

### **Committee Business**

- De Michele reported that she had contacted all members who are eligible for a second term and all had agreed to serve. She will submit paperwork to the Executive’s office for Brandal, Coney, Day, Jensen, Paul-Lyle, Plackett and Taylor. Schary is completing her second term and will be honored at the September meeting.
- DeMichele reminded members that the Waterborne Transit Project drop-in open house will be held on May 19<sup>th</sup> from 3:00 to 8:00 p.m at the King Street Center.
- The committee agreed to hold a second June meeting on Tuesday, the 28<sup>th</sup>, in order to complete work on the Waterborne Transit Study.

### **Adjournment**

Taylor adjourned the meeting at 8:35 p.m.